



## Dawn A. Shelton

October 8, 1937 - May 14, 2023

Tallahassee – Dawn Shelton passed away on Sunday, May 14 at the age of 85. She was an intelligent and exceptional individual who was always steadfast and caring in her commitments to family, friends, and community.

She was born in the mountains of Virginia to Luther and Fannie Alt in October 1937. She grew up on a farm, which not only taught her lifelong skills, but also grounded her in the importance of family, the reality of life's hardships, and most importantly the fortitude to rise above any challenge placed in front of her. It was these life lessons that made her a stronger person, a more compassionate nurse, caring mother, and a fierce advocate – especially for those in need.

She graduated summa cum laude from high school and then attended the Medical College of Virginia where she received her bachelor's degree in nursing. She then went into the United States Air Force as a commissioned officer, serving at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, where she played an integral role in opening their pediatric unit.

It was at the Air Force Academy that she met the love of her life, Richard, and they were married in December 1961. The family eventually moved to Gainesville, Florida where she worked as a nurse at Shands Hospital and began raising her family, while Richard pursued his bachelor's degree in

journalism and MBA from the University of Florida (#GoGators). In 1969, the family moved to Tallahassee.

While raising three daughters, she worked as a nurse at the FSU Student Medical Center and then Sunland Hospital – which cared for mentally and physically disabled patients. Simultaneously, she continued her education receiving a master's degree in public administration from Florida State University (#GoNoles). She then worked for the remainder of her career as an administrator with the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration until retirement.

Shortly after retirement she became the primary caregiver for the love of her life – Richard – as Alzheimer's slowly ravaged his brain and body for 10 years until his death in October 2019. She was resolute that he would spend his remaining years at home as she had promised him, and she worked relentlessly – sometimes at the expense of her own health – to keep her word.

Beyond her trained nursing skills, she was a consummate cook, skilled seamstress, green-thumb gardener, top notch Girl Scout Leader (and nurse) and an exceptional skater who could out-skate her middle school daughters at Skate Inn.

Dawn is survived by her three daughters Lynne (Bob) Gordon, Diana (Stephen) Oropallo, and Laura Shelton, and three grandchildren – Jaiden and Alexandra Oropallo, and Casey Gordon.

She will be remembered by everyone she met for her kind heart, generosity, healing nature, and just good old-fashioned know-how and ingenuity, and her love of golden retrievers, Taylor and Bella.

The family will hold a private service. In lieu of flowers, for those wishing to

honor this beautiful soul who gave so much, to so many, for so many years – memorial donations may be made to Big Bend Hospice, which was a shining light and provided immense solace in her final days.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.